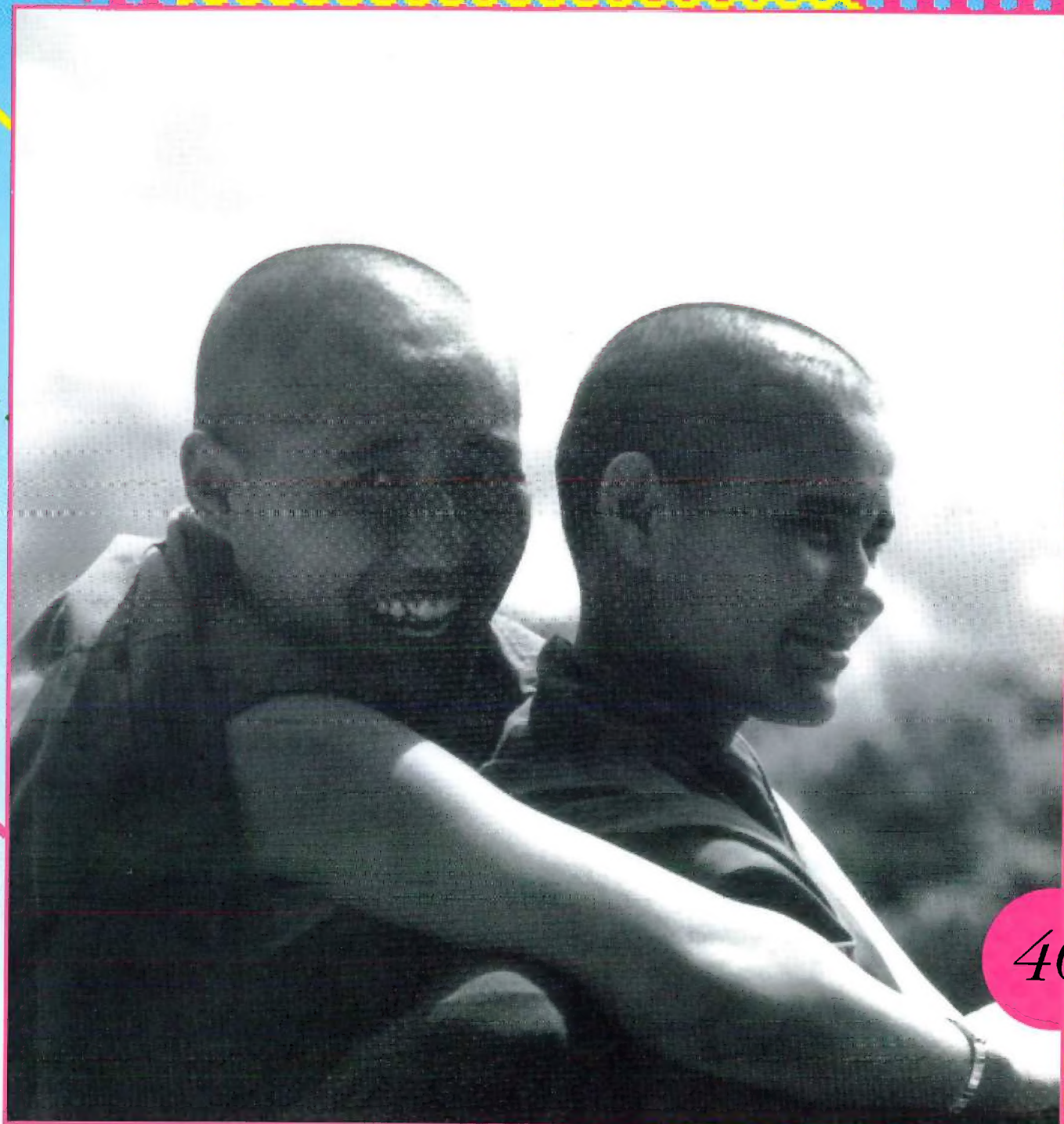


Lutheran World Federation

December 1996

# Youth

magazine



40

Department for  
Mission and Development





*The Youth magazine is a publication of the Desk for Youth in Church and Society of the Lutheran World Federation Department for Mission and Development.*

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*Printed in Switzerland by Below The Line Productions S.A.*

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*Dialogue  
or  
Mission?*



## WHAT IS BUDDHISM?

“Buddhism is the Teaching and Practice, including a system of mental training founded by the man who, more than 2,500 years ago in Northern India, came to be known as the Buddha. It aims at the cultivation of a healthy attitude, and the direct realization of and harmonizing with the true nature of things.”

*Source:* The Forest Hermitage Buddhist Monastery, Birmingham, England



## EDITORIAL

Dear Friends!

*We wish you a blessed New Year!*

Let us begin with a comment from one of our friends working as a missionary in Kenya as he was waiting for one of our publications to come out, "I have been told that 'there is no hurry in Africa' and that 'hurry, hurry doesn't bring any blessing'." Maybe that can also be said about here". So greetings from "slow" Geneva.

We are happy to finally present this new issue of *Youth Magazine*. As you know, we are getting ready for the LWF Ninth Assembly in Hong Kong, July 1997, and that means a substantial increase in publication activity in the LWF. So we had to be patient as priority was given to Assembly publications.

The main focus in this issue is Buddhism. We bring you a short history of the Study Program on Buddhism conducted by the Lutheran World Federation Department for Mission and Development's Desk for Youth in Church and Society since 1993 and a number of articles written by some of the participants in the program. We would appreciate your reactions to the fact that such a study program was conducted, and

also to the articles. Your comments and suggestions will help us to understand how important the issue of other religions is for youth in different parts of the world.

The next focus in this issue is HIV/AIDS which also has been a study program conducted by the Youth Desk. You can read a short report about the HIV/AIDS Workshop in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. We also have included some news for your information. The Youth Desk will continue to plan and organize HIV/AIDS-related activities in the future.

There was a very positive response to the last issue of *Youth Magazine* focusing on street children. We return to this burning problem in this issue with reactions from our readers. We also want to tell you about the World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children which took place in Stockholm, Sweden in August 1996.

The Young Women Leadership Program in progress since 1994 held its final event this October here in Geneva. The November 1994 issue of *Youth Magazine* included information on this interesting and much needed program. A report evaluating the whole three-year program is now being prepared and will be available from the Youth Desk in the second half of 1997. A short story featuring some of the participants appears in this issue.

We are pleased to welcome our new intern at the Youth Desk, in this issue. Anna-Karin Berglund from Sweden started working with us on November 4, and has helped us with the editing of this issue.

We hope that *Youth Magazine* will continue to be a blessing and an inspiring resource for your life and work. We would be happy to receive your suggestions and contributions in the future.

Ondrej Anna-Karin Birgitta

Your Editorial team,  
Ondrej Prostředník, Anna-Karin Berglund, Birgitta Voltenauer

*"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness - on them light has shined."*

(Isaiah 9:2)





## BUDDHISM STUDY VISIT TO BIRMINGHAM, ENGLAND 19-24 APRIL 1996

By Ondrej Prostednik

The Buddhism Study Visit to Birmingham was the second phase of the Study Program on Religious Dialogue started by the LWF/DMD Desk for Youth in Church and Society in February 1993. In the first phase, eleven participants, all from different countries and churches, visited Thailand and Nepal. The reason for the LWF becoming involved in this issue was to assist our churches in putting the questions of why young people seek other religions onto their agendas. The perceptions made during the first phase can be expressed in the words of one of the participants: "Something really deep within our wealthy Western fellowship seems to have misunderstood certain basic human needs. Westerners are searching and searching. Is the way toward the East?" *Youth Magazine* Issue No. 35, October 1993, entitled *Christians Encounter Buddhism* carried a report from the first phase of the Study Program.

The objectives of the concluding second phase were to study the impact of Buddhist monasteries and centers on communities in the West and to examine the response of the Christian churches to their presence. Since Buddhism is the fastest growing religion in Great Britain, it seemed to be the most suitable place for the second phase of our study.

The program was prepared in cooperation with the Westhill R.E. Centre of Westhill College at Selly Oak, Birmingham. The centre is specialized in organizing educational courses involving interreligious dialogue. The participants in the study, the resource person and the LWF staff, from Norway, Finland, Hungary, Slovakia, Colombia and Germany, stayed in a house on the college campus.

An important part of the program in Birmingham was lectures on Buddhism given by a Buddhist lay person, Ramona Kauth.

Ramona, born a Roman-Catholic in the United States, converted to Buddhism about twenty years ago and is now a regular cooperator with the Westhill R.E. Centre. She belongs to a Tibetan Buddhist Community in Birmingham. In her lectures, she focused on comparison of selected Buddhist and Christian texts and introduced the participants to basic meditation techniques. However, the greater part of the program consisted of visits and meetings with local Buddhist communities. The participants visited three ethnic Buddhist communities as well as another community called "Friends of the Western Buddhist Order". This one represents the greatest challenge to the church and is worth closer study.

During the visit participants also met with Dr. Andrew Wingate, principal of the College of the Ascension who is a specialist in Buddhist-Christian dialogue. He gave an overview of the ongoing dialogue and response of the Christian churches to the presence of Buddhists in Birmingham.

The following articles by participants in the Birmingham visit bring you their impressions, observations and comments which you might find useful as you face the influence of Eastern religions in your own community.

*Participants on Westhill  
College Campus,  
Birmingham*

*From left: Ramona Kauth,  
Tore Svaeren, Heiner  
Hoffmann, Tamas Fabiny,  
Johanna Jämsä, Sandra  
Corzo, Laura Maria  
Raitis, Ole Inge  
Bekkelund, Ján Hrobon*



Photo: Ondrej Prostednik





## DO WE UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER?

### THE DIFFERENT MEANING OF TERMS USED BY BUDDHISTS AND CHRISTIANS

*By Ján Hrobon, Slovakia*



For Europeans, it is quite an unusual experience to meet Buddhists in the East; exotic countries with people of a different culture, history, mentality, religion. It might seem strange to a European, but after a while you realize that everything except you fit together in one big harmony.

It is also an interesting experience to meet Buddhists in the West. People and the world around them seem to live in some sort of harmony where Buddhism with its colorful, flourishing world simply does not fit in. Something that is so natural and commonplace in its home country becomes strange in other parts of the world. We then realize how much we are depen-

dent on and determined by the world surrounding us.

Still, I believe there are some basic principles valid for all humankind even though one might have different ways of understanding and applying them.

Buddhism has developed its 2,500-year-old tradition in places where people have accepted it as the answer to their questions. What is natural for the people of India, Nepal, Burma and Thailand can seem strange for people educated in the Christian tradition. Meeting people of different religions in different cultural contexts can raise many questions, among them the question of our own identity.

Our world is getting smaller. There are many possibilities of communication. Tourism is increasing. This also has influenced Buddhism. In confrontation with other religions, especially Christianity, it has to communicate its teaching in a new way.

The Christian-Buddhist dialogue compels us to return to the basic truth of our own faith and confession. It makes us come back to the elementary principles of human values. With a new intensity we raise basic existential questions about God and ourselves. In looking for the right answers we often realize that first of all we are human beings and then Christians or Buddhists.

Let us examine a few basic terms from Buddhist and Christian ter-





minology to find out some similarities or differences.

**Concept of God** - In Buddhism there is no concept of a personal God. Buddhism is more a philosophy than a religion. This fact might reveal such a significant difference between Christianity and Buddhism that we can ask if there are any reasons at all for dialogue. But the question is whether Buddhism can be considered as an atheistic system.

When Siddharta committed himself to discover the source of suffering and how to eliminate it, he at certain moments attained enlightenment and became Buddha, which means "the enlightened one." Is this enlightenment the result of Buddha's own struggle, something which he discovered in himself, using his own abilities? Or is enlightenment something beyond, something one has to strive for and even though one attains it, in its very essence it remains a mystery? A person might

be familiar with the Four Noble Truths and follow the Eightfold Path and finally achieve *nirvana*. But what is the essence of *nirvana*? Are there any exact terms to explain it as something that we can perceive with our regular human abilities?

It seems to me that Enlightenment is something mysterious that goes beyond human senses. This might indicate that the Buddhist system has a metaphysical dimension and thus could not be considered as an atheistic system.

Jesus said: "Strive first for the Kingdom of God". (Matthew 6:33) We know how to do it. But do we know what the Kingdom of God really is? This remains a mystery. God is the light which shows us the way to His Kingdom. In John 1:9-10 we can read: "The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world and the world came into being through Him; yet the world did not know Him."

In Buddhism, what is depended upon is self-reliance, in Christianity it is reliance in God.

**Suffering** - According to Buddhist teachings we suffer because we desire. The suffering can be eliminated by ceasing all desire. The goal is to realize the nonexistence of self.

In Christianity suffering is the consequence of our sin. We have rebelled against God and thus are alienated from Him. We must repent our sins and trust salvation through Jesus Christ. Jesus taught us that the solution to suffering is found not in eliminating desire but in having the right desire. (Matthew 5:6)

**The Way** - for Christians it means to live according to God's will, for Buddhists, to follow the Eightfold Path. Buddhism and Christianity both require ethical conduct based on moral precepts. These moral principles concur: refrain from taking lives, stealing, immoral sexual behavior, lying.

The ultimate goal of Buddhism and Christianity is the same - to become liberated from death. In Buddhism it is liberation from the cycle of death and rebirth, in Christianity it is liberation from eternal death.

In Buddhist teaching *nirvana* is liberation from self. In realizing the nonexistence of self, permanence is found. In Christianity permanence is found in an eternal fellowship with a loving and personal God.

The deeper we go, the more similarities become apparent. Buddhists say that we climb up the mountain but that there are many different ways to reach the top.

We as Christians climbing up to the top meet people with different needs and different questions. It is good to take them along up to the top where, we hope, all questions and problems will be solved.





## WHY IS BUDDHISM ATTRACTIVE TO WESTERNERS?

By Johanna Jämsä, Finland

*A Buddhist monk is dependent on his followers for food. They bring him food which they have prepared at home. He takes a spoonful from each plate, puts it in the big pot and eats it in another room. Meanwhile, his followers share the remainder.*

Photo: Ondrej Prostednik



*"How did you turn out to be a Buddhist?"*

This was the question we asked all the Western Buddhists we met in Birmingham, England. Most of them had been Christians and had changed their religion in their twenties. The answers we received showed certain similarities.

Many of the Buddhists had their initial encounter with Buddhism through **meditation**, often during their studies at university. The reasons for starting to meditate varied. For some of them, meditation had been a conscious trial to find religious answers and an alternative to Christianity. The most interesting explanation for frustration with Christianity came from one of the Buddhists who said he had found Christianity far too simple: "The basic teachings of Jesus can be put down in one and a half pages. That's nothing!" Others had their first encounter with meditation just because they were curious - without thinking of the religious connections of meditation. The question I ask is: Why is meditation so influential? Is its influence based on psychology, on the fact that it offers the possibility of intensive emotion?

Or is its influence based on religious power?

One of the most important reasons why they had chosen Buddhism seemed to be the possibility to be religious without the need to believe in God. They had found it impossible to combine God with the scientific world view. Also they had found the problem of suffering better answered in Buddhism than in Christianity. Buddhism is **human-centered**: everyone gets what is right according to the law of *karma*. The human-centeredness and **non-theism** of Buddhism had been easier to accept than belief in one, almighty god. One of the Buddhists even said that a Buddhist doesn't need to believe in anything - like Christians - because a Buddhist knows instead of believing. We didn't agree with him, but he described his view about Christianity being less intellectual than Buddhism in an interesting way.

As the man in the "Friends of the Western Buddhist Order" (FWBO) said, Buddhism gives - at least in the form the FWBO represents - the possibility to choose just those dogmas and practices which suit you individually. So,

in addition to its human-centeredness, Buddhism is **individualistic**. It gives a feeling of freedom. For an outsider it seems that there still are quite a few things a Buddhist has to accept, for example, Buddha's authority, belief in reincarnation and *karma*.

The last point I want to mention is that for some Westerners, Buddhism seems to be a fresh, **exotic** alternative to Christianity which carries the burden of a bloody past. It seems that Christianity is too often known for its history instead of its dogmas or present-day reality.

The study trip to Birmingham had the same impact on me as the trip to Thailand and Nepal three years ago: meeting nice, ordinary Westerners who had chosen Buddhism forced me to reevaluate why I want to be a Christian. That evaluation is not always easy but is needed. One member of our group said: "Perhaps we Christians need Buddhism in the West". Buddhism may help us to define our own identity more clearly. Knowing better who we are makes us better prepared to meet those who believe in a different way, respecting and loving them.





## MEDITATION IN CHRISTIANITY AND BUDDHISM

By Laura Maria Raitis, Finland

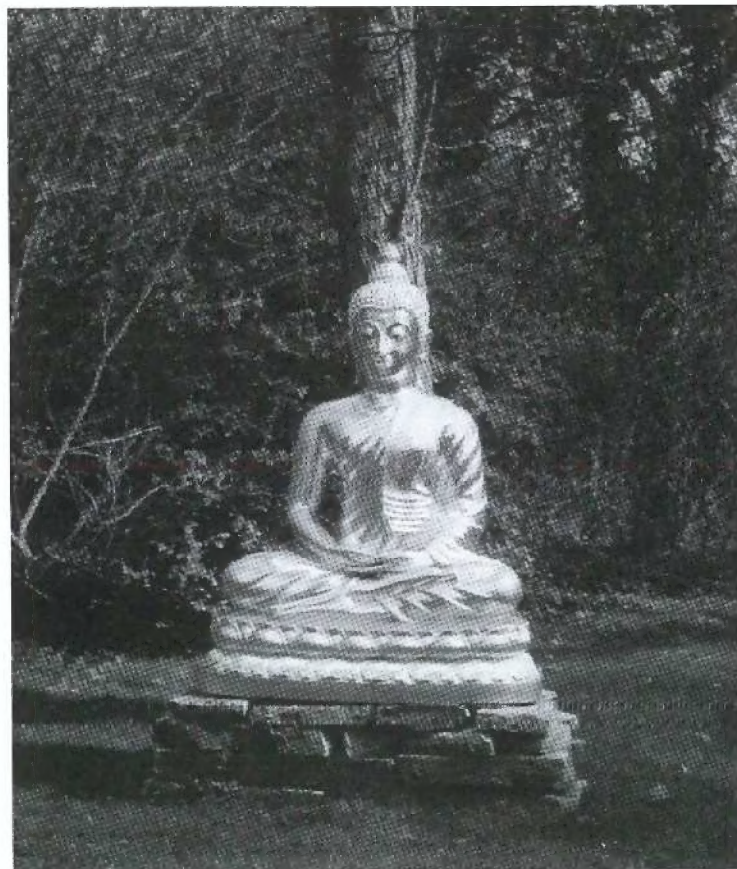


Photo: Ondrej Prostednik

Buddhist centers in the West are very often found attractive because they offer meditation courses and regular meditation sessions. People are interested in meditation, because they think it can help them to relax, to reach a balance in their body and soul, and make the spiritual dimension an integrated part of their life. They are right. Meditation can lead to peace, joy and increased experience of the richness of life. That's also why Christians have been meditating through the centuries. The Christian traditions - except many of the monastic ones - have not paid as much attention to the sitting postures, the breathing and the techniques for concentrating the

mind, but it has been important to be silent, read the Bible by oneself and pray. Many Christians have begun and ended their day with some kind of meditation, either alone or with others.

### *Old Christian Techniques*

Stricter meditation techniques were developed in Christian monasteries, both Eastern and Western. They were used by monks and nuns, but some of them even spread among lay people. Reading and memorizing Bible verses or passages, silence and prayer were the main components of Christian meditation. The way you sat and breathed during the meditation was important. Medi-

tation was practiced regularly. Meditation practice together with decency and sacraments were considered to be the necessary elements of a virtuous Christian life.

One of the old meditation techniques, which today is fairly widespread, is the use of the prayer "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me" or shorter forms of the same prayer. Repetition of this prayer, the Jesus Prayer, already was taught by the Eastern Fathers in the early Middle Ages. Today, this practice is recommended by many teachers as good practice for anyone who wants to meditate.

### *Buddhist Meditation*

In Buddhism, meditation is perhaps even more essential than in Christianity. At least, Buddhist meditation is more known as a concept than Christian meditation. The meditation techniques taught by the different Buddhist schools vary: some of them are extremely ascetic, others to a high degree adapted to the modern Western life style. In any case, meditation activities are offered in every single Buddhist center where Westerners can learn about Buddhism. In Asia it is common that Western travelers take a meditation course for some days or even weeks at a monastery, and in the West you can go to Buddhist centers to receive instruction in meditation.

In Birmingham, England, we tried to meditate on loving-kindness under the direction of a representative of the Western Buddhist Order. The aim was to cre-





ate loving-kindness toward all beings. This is not far from what Christians aim at when they pray for forgiveness and renewal of their minds so that they can show God's love to others.

The crucial difference is that Christians speak about God and believe they are purified by God and that they receive love from God which they also can show to others. Buddhists believe that meditation itself purifies from evil and brings about love.

Many Christians might have doubts when hearing that someone has attended Buddhist meditation. It is true that the contents of Buddhist meditation is Buddhist doctrine. You visualize Buddhist divinities, you meditate on central Buddhist concepts like emptiness or suffering, or you exercise presupposed belief in reincarnation. Still, if you believe in God and his Son, Jesus Christ, you will not lose them when sitting together with Buddhists. If you don't feel like following the meditation instructions, you can sit there praying or, for example, memorizing Christian songs. But, in my opinion, it is not dangerous to try out what it is like to meditate in the Buddhist way. You do not abandon God, and he does not leave you alone.

### Christian Alternatives

Buddhist meditation and other non-Christian meditation techniques, however, should not be the only alternative for people interested in meditation. There are also Christian alternatives. Weekend retreats and weekly meditation sessions may be needed as a

*"The crucial difference is that Christians speak about God and believe they are purified by God and that they receive love from God which they also can show to others. Buddhists believe that meditation itself purifies from evil and brings about love."*

part of the work of the churches. They are often introduced as new activities which correspond to the needs of modern people. In reality, they are deeply rooted in our own Christian tradition, even if sometimes inspired by the wisdom of other traditions.

In Finland, the number of silent retreats as a part of the work of the churches and Christian organizations is increasing. The understanding of what a silent retreat is and, for instance, how much and what kind of medita-

tion is included in it, varies. I think people who are explicitly interested in and maybe have practiced some meditation should be offered retreats with mainly well guided meditation sessions and teaching about Christian meditation, in order to help them start meditating regularly in their daily life. This is not what everyone is looking for, but there are people who could find their place in the church if they discovered its ancient meditation traditions connected to the Bible, baptism, Holy Communion and Christian fellowship. A sound practice of Christian meditation never loses these connections.

Meditation also can be used as a part of devotions, prayers and service. Then the persons planning it must have enough knowledge and experience of meditation and take into consideration how the congregation will react. Silence also can become uncomfortable.

*Dialogue  
or  
Mission?*

### TIPS FOR FURTHER READING

There is a considerable number of Christian meditation techniques to learn and countless books on the subject. In Scandinavia, Carmelite Father Wilfrid Stinissen must be mentioned as one of the authors worth knowing about. In English, William Johnson, Andrew Louth, Henry J. M. Nouwen and Kallistos Ware, among others, have written significant works on meditation. These men also have been teachers for Lutheran pastors and lay people, leading retreats and writing about them. A comprehensive introduction to the subject is given by Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright and Edward Yarnold in the book *The Study of Spirituality*.



## RELIGION - OPIUM FOR THE PEOPLE?

By Ole Inge Bekkelund, Norway



Photo: Siv Limstrand

Religion is opium for the people, Karl Marx once said. His statement represents a broader criticism of Christianity in modern Europe. Nineteenth century Marxists accused the Christian faith of being a tool for the governing people. Marxism criticized Christianity's role as being only one of therapy for mentally and materialistically suffering people. We therefore do not need Christianity at all, some Westerners say.

As Christians, we partly must agree that if the main focus for Christian faith is to help people live out daily life and help solve their mental and psychological problems, we no longer correspond to the Gospel of Jesus. The covenant of Jesus does not depend on our mental and psychological development. The center of Christianity must be Christ and his work for human beings.

### *Salvation*

Of course, it cannot be denied that the Christian faith may help people through sorrow and mental problems. But this cannot be anything other than gifts offered from God after we have received the holy Spirit into our lives. This path is not made for people seeking salvation through mental training. Here, salvation comes from God only, and the way to him is neither through psychological strength nor any other kind of practice. It is through trust and confidence in Christ.

At this point, Buddhists think differently. Their way is through mindfulness. The path of life is to be sought through meditation, discipline and purification of the mind. You have to open up and find your true heritage disguised behind fear, stress, envy, pride, anger, desire and egoism. This is human suffering according to Buddhist teaching. The noble task is to create the right attitude toward temptations that come our way. Enlightenment is to be reached after years, when desire no longer bothers you. All of the work has to be done by you. No one can help you.

### *Buddhists on Marx*

When I met the British Buddhists who appeared just like ordinary British people, I asked myself: How would they as Buddhists respond to Marx's criticism - Religion as opium for the people? Would they consider it as impolite critique, just as many Christians do? No, not at all. The two Buddhists with whom I spoke said these were good questions. Existential ques-





tions attract many Westerners to Buddhism, not necessarily in refuge to a god or something outside themselves.

I expected the Buddhists to defend Buddhism from being reduced to some kind of psychotherapy. But on the contrary, this was a good approach to understanding Buddhism. They did not even consider being compared to psychotherapy as criticism. Obviously the whole point is to train the mind, to give it new thoughts. This is Buddhists' task.

As I understand it, many people consider Buddhism as the answer to a wide range of existential questions such as: Who am I? Why am I not happy? Where does envy come from? Why do I have such low self-esteem? In the late sixties when the Vietnam riots hit newspaper headlines and Eastern religious thought seriously entered Europe, the Buddhists expected many people to convert to Bud-

dism. As the years passed, they realized that meditation together with complex literature only recruited people from intellectual groups.

Neither in the 70s nor the 90s has patient exploration of heavy poetry and meditation topped the interests of youth. The number of Buddhists did not grow significantly in the West.

### *Buddhism as Opium?*

A religious person is someone who admits there is something metaphysical that exceeds the frame of his being. A Christian is a person who primarily has faith in a god outside himself and receives strength to reject desire and suffering from that god. Only as a result of this can there be talk of healing or some help for psychological and mental problems.

In relation to Christianity, a Buddhist is a person who primarily tries to improve his mental and emotional consciousness. This is necessary to avoid suffering. Only then can you talk of the religious phenomena of *nirvana*. Even if *nirvana* is not easily comparable with the Christian doctrine of salvation, we may say that both doctrines belong to the religious scene. According to Christianity, salvation comes first and creates good deeds. In Buddhism, *nirvana* comes after many years of practice and meditation.

In this way, Christianity is probably much more a religion than Buddhism, but Buddhist teachings do involve religious dimensions. May we ask, then, if one way to approach Buddhism would be to consider it as opium?

## WHAT DID THE BUDDHA TEACH?

### THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

1. *Dukkha* - Suffering or Unsatisfactoriness - The truth of suffering in all the realms
2. *The Cause of Dukkha* - The truth of the origin of suffering is in craving or thirst; craving for sensual pleasures, craving for existence, and craving for non-existence manifested as ignorance, aversion and attraction, jealousy and envy, pride
3. *The Ending of Dukkha* - The truth that suffering has an end through the following of:
4. *The Way to End Dukkha* - The truth of the path to the end of suffering: The Eightfold Path

### THE EIGHTFOLD PATH

*Right View* - The Four Noble Truths, Kamma and result

*Right Thought and Intention* - Renunciation, loving-kindness, harmlessness

*Right Speech* - Avoid lying, slander, harsh speech and frivolous talk

*Right Action* - Abstain from killing, stealing and sexual misconduct

*Right Livelihood* - Avoid deceit, treachery, soothsaying, trickery and usury, and trading in arms, people, flesh, alcohol, drugs and poisons

*Right Effort* - Avoid or overcome unwholesome things. Develop or maintain wholesome things

*Right Mindfulness* - Be mindful and aware of one's body, feelings, mental state and understanding of the Buddha's teaching

*Right Concentration* - Be alert, focussed, calm and concentrated on one thing

Source: The Forest Hermitage Buddhist Monastery, Birmingham, England



## TO UNDERSTAND - TO BE UNDERSTOOD

### THE COMPLEXITY OF DIALOGUE

By Tore Sværen, Norway

*The term "dialogue" has increasingly become used by different Churches and organizations as a method or strategy in their contacts with people of non-Christian faiths or of no faith at all. Have we just given a modern name to our traditional concept of mission and evangelization? Are we using this term without knowing what it actually means?*

To be honest, I did not think of the concept of dialogue as particularly complex until the last days of our study trip to Birmingham, England, and when I was challenged to write this article. That is in spite of three-months intensive education on the subject, eight months working in so-called dialogue with people of different faiths in Thailand and India, and now two study trips with the LWF. So why has it suddenly turned complex? Because suddenly I am uncertain of how much dialogue I have experienced after all...! I have received lots of lessons, I have had many conversations and discussions with both monks and lay persons. But was it dialogue? My opinion is that complexity of dialogue occurs only when we think we are practicing it, while we are not.

#### **Concepts and Language Barriers**

One of my experiences in meeting with people of other faiths is how important it is to make sure that the words we use actually mean the same to all partici-

pants in the dialogue situation. The development of language is closely related to each country's religious tradition. For example, in dialogue with a Thai Buddhist, or any Buddhists, the word "faith" creates confusion since a Buddhist does not relate to his or her religion with faith, but with his or her own experience in meditation practice. In spite of that, he or she will use the term "faith" in lack of other alternatives. When I, as a Christian, use the term "faith," I have already brought a lot of preconditions - which says something about what Christianity is all about - into the dialogue. My partner will not know that, if I do not tell him or her. I have experienced even more difficulty having a dialogue with Westerners that have converted to Eastern religions, since their vocabulary and language is based on the Christian tradition. The Danish philosopher Soeren Kierkegaard once said that: "...in order to help another person, you are not only supposed to understand him [her], but, even more important, to understand what he [she] understands."<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, you have to make sure that your concept of the meaning of a word will have a common understanding. This also includes the understanding of the concept of dialogue.

#### **Definition**

The word "dialogue" is used in different senses by the proponents of interreligious dialogue.

This is a general definition of the term:

*"Dialogue is a conversation on a common subject between two or more persons with differing views, the primary purpose of which is for each participant to learn from the other so that he or she can change and grow."<sup>2</sup>*

By changing "views" with "faiths" this definition would make sense in our context.

#### **Precondition of Dialogue**

What differentiates a dialogue from most discussions is the necessity of *common ground*. Common ground is a precondition for any dialogue, the existence of which is regarded by the partners in dialogue as an established fact. You may also call it a common starting point, something that you and your partner agree upon. Common ground should also be genuine common interest in, and respect for, your dialogue partner's faith, a willingness to learn something new about both your partner's faith *and* your own. Last but not least, you must be willing to be moved by the other person.

#### **Reason and Motive**

In addition to common ground, your *reason* and *motive* also decide whether you are in dialogue or not. For what *reason* are you interested in dialogue with a person of another faith? What is the





point? What are the arguments for doing it? And why should he or she be interested? Is it your genuine interest in and curiosity about people different from you? Are you doing it because you think it is important that all people communicate, that we are facing common challenges in the world community that can only be solved through mutual understanding? And what is your *motivation* for doing it? Are you doing it because you are commanded to preach the gospel to all people? Would you like your dialogue partner to be converted through your conversation? The reason why I am not answering the questions is that they must be answered by those who practice, think they practice, or intend to practice dialogue. I think the most important precondition is honesty. Honesty about your reasons and motives, so that your partner may choose whether or not he or she wants to give dialogue with you a try. Like in any games you must agree upon the rules before you start - and stick to them!

Whatever conclusion, or definition of the concept of dialogue you end up with, a couple of big questions are left unanswered:

*Will your dialogue partner accept your motive and reason for dialogue?*

*Does he or she want to talk to you at all, if your motive for dialogue is to convert him or her?*

### WCC's Preconditions of Dialogue

Since 1948, the World Council of Churches has changed its view of the relationship between Chris-



Photo: Siv Limstrand

tianity and non-Christian religions.<sup>3</sup> This development has led to, among other things, a definition of the concept of dialogue, and a set of ground rules or preconditions for dialogue. Dr. António Barbosa da Silva described these rules in a study on Jewish-Christian dialogue, with remarks in *italics*:

1. Dialogues should normally be planned together.  
*"...with the respect to the need for the partners to focus on the same issues which may be theological, socio-political, etc. It is also important that the partners have some ideas about the goal, common ground of, and reason for dialogue."*
2. Partners in dialogue should take stock of the religious, cultural and ideological diversities of their local situation.
3. Partners in dialogue should be free to "define themselves".  
*"...listening carefully to the neighbours' self-understanding enables the Christians better to*

*obey the commandment not to bear false witness against their neighbours" and "can also be interpreted as: Partners in dialogue should respect one another's religious and cultural identity."*

4. Dialogue should be pursued by sharing in common enterprises in the community.
5. Partners in dialogue should be aware of cultural loyalties.
6. Partners in dialogue should be aware of their ideological commitments.

*Dialogue  
or  
Mission?*



### *Is Dialogue Mission?*

As Christians, we are commanded to proclaim the gospel to all people. Different parts of the church always have had, and still have, different strategies to try to fulfil this command. Whether dialogue is just another mission strategy, or another way of relating to people of non-Christian faiths, depends on where you are in the Christian landscape. To make a long discussion short this is, of course, yet another discussion inside the church between fundamentalists and evangelicals and other more liberal groups. But is dialogue mission? I will say "yes, of course!" in the same way as your way of living as a Christian is a witness, a mission!

### *Dialogue as a Christian Way of Living*

I will not describe dialogue as a method, but more as a life style, a way of living that is characterised by tolerance, generosity and genuine respect toward all fellow beings. Stanley Samartha, former director of "the dialogue sub-unit of the WCC" describes dialogue like this: "No more than 'community' can 'dialogue' be precisely defined. Rather it has to be described, experienced and developed as a life style... In dialogue we actively respond to the command 'to love God and your neighbour

as yourself' ...Thus we soundly reject any idea of "dialogue in community" as a secret weapon in armoury of an aggressive Christian militancy. We adopt it rather as a means of living out our faith in Christ in service of Community with our neighbours." <sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kirkegaard, Soeren, from "Views upon my writings"

<sup>2</sup> Hick, John, 1977, p. 1

<sup>3</sup> da Silva, António Barbosa, 1992, p. 48

<sup>4</sup> Samartha, Stanley (ed.), 1977, *Faith in the midst of faiths*, p. 144

Mind precedes all things,  
Mind is chief, mind-made are they;  
If with a mind corrupt one speaks or acts,  
Suffering follows  
As the wheel the hoof of the ox.  
Mind precedes all things,

Hating won't stop hating.  
Not hating stops hating.  
That's how it is, and always  
has been.

*The Buddha*

Mind is chief, mind-made  
are they;  
If with a pure mind one  
speaks or acts,  
Happiness follows  
As the shadow that never  
leaves.

So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.

Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, with my mind I am a slave to the law of God, but with my flesh I am a slave to the law of sin.

*The Apostle Paul, Romans 7:21-25*





## BUDDHISM GOES WEST

By Sandra Corzo, Colombia

Although the influence of Eastern cultures for a long time has been present in Western society through art and philosophy, the idea of integration between East and West is rather recent, but developing fast. Clear evidence of this is that Buddhism is becoming more popular in Western countries.

This popularity is partly due to immigration of people from Eastern cultures to the West. But, what seems to have more influence are Westerners who bring their ideas back home after having had a deep experience with traditional Eastern cultures. Westerners who are interested in Eastern philosophies also play an important role in making Buddhism better known in the West. To illustrate this phenomenon, I will refer to the specific case of the United Kingdom, where the "Friends of the Western Buddhist Order" was established in 1967. This order now extends worldwide. Its principal aim is to integrate Buddhism into contemporary Western society. It has twenty-eight branches, six retreat centers and five "livelihood businesses" across the world. Buddhists should follow the Eight-fold Path and its fifth step is to have the "right means of livelihood." The "livelihood businesses", run in accordance with Buddhist teachings, provide members of the order with work of an acceptable ethical nature.

The founder of the order, Sangharakshita - Eastern name for a Western man who has spent a big part of his life in India - wants to show how to integrate Buddhism in the West. According to him, integration of Buddhism

into Western society requires changes in the following areas:

**Psychological:** Through meditation the level of consciousness can be raised for at least some of the people in Western society.

**Social:** The way of life one leads affects the level of consciousness. It would be necessary to change Western society to make it easier for Buddhists to live in. The presence of Buddhists in Sangharakshita's envisioned Buddhist-Western society would evidently be an ingredient which could not be missing. But, what is a Buddhist? According to Sangharakshita, a Buddhist is a person who "...goes for Refuge to the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha, and who, as an expression and as a reinforcement of that Going for Refuge, seeks to observe the ethical precepts of Buddhism."

**Economical:** The establishment of businesses where Buddhists can work under religiously acceptable conditions, with ethical values which do not harm their spirituality.

**Intellectual:** Establishment of schools to teach Buddhist philosophy and its integration into the Western intellectual sphere. It would be necessary to abolish some ideas, for example the belief that you cannot have an ethical and spiritual life without invoking the help of a supernatural power (such as the Christian God).

Obviously, from this perspective, it would be necessary to integrate Western society into Buddhism and not the opposite.

The kind of integration which Sangharakshita proposes could be successful on all levels with the condition that society be composed of Buddhists. One of the teachings of Buddha is to develop love, kindness and compassion without the help of any God. This would put the Christian God as the biggest obstacle to the integration of Buddhism in the West, according to Sangharakshita's model.

Following this model, integration between Buddhism and Western society would not be possible. But, Christians cannot ignore the fact that Buddhism exists and that it has many followers around the world. So, developing an integration model from the Christian point of view would be useful. The elements and actions of a Christian model toward an integration with Buddhism are as yet undefined, but they are a big challenge to Christians. Whatever model may be proposed should be based on our belief: love of our neighbor as a result of God's love and mercy working in us.





## YOUTH INTERN - FROM SWEDEN



*Anna-Karin Berglund*

*Hello!*

I am the new intern at the LWF Youth Desk in Geneva. My first day here was November 4 and I will stay until July 31 next year. I have only been here a little over a month but I already feel at home in the office, thanks to my helpful and patient colleagues. While I am here, I will help plan and also take part in the Pre-Assembly Youth Conference (PAYC) which takes place in Bangkok next summer before the LWF Assembly in Hong Kong.

I am very excited about the PAYC and am looking forward to meeting fellow Lutheran youth from all over the world. It will be good to get together, to learn from each other, and prepare for the Hong Kong Assembly. The PAYC and the Assembly itself offer a great chance for young people involved in the church to influence the future work of the LWF.

My other big task as an intern is to work on *Youth Magazine*. Because

this issue of the magazine was almost finished when I came here, I have only helped to edit it. I will take a more active part in the creation of the next issue.

I grew up in Sweden in a suburb of Stockholm. I belong to the Täby Church and sang in its choirs from age eight until just a few months ago, except for when I was in the United States. Everyone who has been a member of a choir knows how much fun it is to sing together, especially when you have practiced for a long time and then do a good performance.

Through the choir, I became involved in church youth work.

After finishing high school in 1992, I went to Washington, D.C. to study at the American University. Washington is an exciting city where politics is everything and the contrasts enormous. The university has a large international student body and I met people from all over the world. I worked for the school's student newspaper and also interned at Swedish Broadcasting's Washington bureau. Last year, I graduated with a degree in Communications and International Relations. Since then, I have worked with two newspapers in the Stockholm area and also taken international law classes at the University of Stockholm.

When I heard about the internship at the LWF Youth Desk over a year ago, I immediately thought it was something for me. I wanted to work in an international organization using my journalistic skills and be involved in issues

that I find important. My stay in Geneva and my work at the LWF will be a great learning experience for me and I also think that I can contribute with some new ideas. I am very interested in human rights and feel that children's rights are especially important. During my time at the LWF Youth Desk, I would like to know more about the situation of children in the world and learn what can be done to improve their conditions.

Youth work looks different in different countries. I want to gain a better understanding of what is going on in your churches and I hope to be in contact with many of you during my time here. My experience is only of the work that is done in Sweden. Compared to most people in the world, we have a high standard of living, we have enough to eat, good health-care system, and feel relatively safe when we go outside. Still, church youth work is very important in Sweden where many come from broken families, where there are peer pressure, unemployment and growing racism. Obviously, church youth work in Sweden is different from what young people do in other churches around the world. But there are important similarities, certain things that can be the same for everyone who is young and who belongs to a church. A sense of community and support, a common goal, meeting and having a good time with people who share your beliefs.





## "BE NOT ASHAMED, CHRIST HAS SET US FREE"

### UPDATE - PRE-ASSEMBLY YOUTH CONFERENCE

At the end of June next year, Bangkok will be full of enthusiastic young Lutherans attending the Pre-Assembly Youth Conference (PAYC). Together they will prepare for their participation in the LWF Ninth Assembly in Hong Kong, which will take place immediately after the PAYC. The conference is sponsored by the LWF/DMD Desk for Youth in Church and Society.

Most of the PAYC participants are either delegates or stewards. Both groups will go on to the Assembly in Hong Kong but the delegates will have full voting rights while the stewards will be involved in the administration of the meeting. At the PAYC, however, there will be no difference in the tasks of the delegates and the stewards. Other participants of the PAYC will be LWF Council members representing youth, participants from the region and ecumenical guests. The participants will discuss their ideas and experiences in five working groups, dealing with issues such as youth and worship, human rights, the ecumenical movement, and the information society. Working with these issues in the different groups will help the youth participants promote the ideas discussed in Bangkok in the similar issue groups at the Hong Kong Assembly. There will also be Bible studies to provide biblical reflection on the issues dealt with in the working groups. To better make their voices heard at the Assembly, the PAYC partici-

pants will learn how to express their concerns about the work of the LWF in language used in the Assembly. The participants also will prepare a program section with their visions for the future called "The LWF - 2000 and Beyond" and later present it at the Assembly.

The theme of the PAYC is "Be not ashamed, Christ has set us free" (2 Tim. 1:8 and Gal. 5:1) and is linked to the Assembly theme "In Christ called to Witness". It is intended to encourage young people to talk about how difficult it can be to act as a witness of one's faith; but also about the possibilities of freedom to witness given through Christ.

The PAYC participants will have an opportunity to meet with youth from the local Lutheran church as the opening worship will be celebrated together with the local church. The afternoon after the service is reserved for a get-together with the local youth, including a meal of traditional Thai food. Bangkok, with its beautiful and valuable cultural treasures and also its difficulties, so typical of today's large cities, is definitely a challenging place to meet and discuss issues related to youth in church and society.



#### WHERE?

Bangkok, Thailand

#### WHEN?

June 28 - July 6, 1997

#### WHO?

Youth representatives  
from the 122 LWF  
member churches

Women: 72 Men: 52

Africa: 23 Asia: 28

Europe: 48

Latin America: 11

North America: 10

#### WHY?

- To prepare youth delegates and stewards for the Assembly.
- To evaluate LWF Youth Program activities in the period 1990-97.
- To identify issues which the LWF Youth Program will work with for the next seven-year period.
- To build and experience contacts and networks within the global communion.
- To build commitment to the global communion of Lutheran Churches.



## LWF LEADERSHIP TRAINING FOR YOUNG WOMEN, A SUCCESS !

### PROGRAM CREATES ROLE MODELS

The first LWF Leadership Training Program for Young Women was a success, according to feminist theologian, Ranjini Rebera. "You were leaders already when you came to [the program's opening event in] Bossey, but now you have grown far beyond that," Rebera told the 43 women who completed the training program. Rebera, a resource person in the program, spoke during the Oct. 26 ceremony concluding the week-long gathering of program participants in Geneva. In the ceremony, participants received certificates for completing the two-year program.

The program was launched in June 1994 with 45 women from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and North America. Its purpose was to develop leadership in women of LWF member churches, to enable them later to assume leadership positions in their churches. The program organized by the LWF Department for Mission and Development was designed for women aged between 20 and 40 years to enhance personal development. The women were chosen to participate by their church leaderships.

The program staff sought to motivate the participants into wanting to develop their leadership skills.

The participants were encouraged to develop their potential for leadership through seminars, internships, visits to churches, participation in LWF meetings and a counseling network of regional coordinators and local mentors who accompanied the women in their training.

### WHAT DID THE PROGRAM DO FOR YOU?



**Hilma Ndiwakalunga:**  
*"A pillar for other women"*

The training program empowered Namibian participant Hilma Ndiwakalunga so much that she now feels she is "a pillar for other women who can lean on me." The

program opened up new possibilities for the 35-year-old nurse to work within her church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia. And "they are expecting a lot from me", she rejoiced. Ndiwakalunga counsels women in difficult personal situations and often finds herself in the role of mediator, using her contacts with the church leadership to present the concerns of other women. Among the positive aspects of the training program was that the participants were not spoon-fed with knowledge, but could instead develop their own personal leadership style, she said. She welcomed the opportunity to see different role models. But she wondered why the program only addressed young women and not also young men.



**Ulrike Ernst:**  
*"I know now where my strengths lie."*

The training program enabled German participant Ulrike Ernst to engage in self-reflection and work more purposefully. Ernst,

Photos: F. Andreas Havenga





32, a member of the Evangelical Church of Pomerania, finances her theology studies by working as a lecturer in English. As a result of the training program, she now knows more clearly where her strengths lie and that after her final exams she wants to work for a doctorate. The other participants gave her feedback and asked her questions. "For me, the course was a forum for reflection," she said. Ernst also regarded it as helpful that the program participants did not just meet once, but saw one another several times over a longer period of time. The feeling that they would meet again helped them become a group, which will also help them in the future. Yet some wistfulness remains: "We neglected to consider more thoroughly that women have very different skills, whether intellectual or theological, and that they also bring with them very different experiences," she said.



**Annedore Venhaus:**  
*Accept challenges*

Annedore Venhaus from Paraguay, 36, distinguishes between two levels in her development when she speaks about the training program. Her personal growth took place in Paraguay, while the training program helped her gain clarity on her role

in the church and the challenges of leadership. Venhaus, mother of two children and a foster child, was 33 when appointed district pastor, and so more or less assumed the role of superintendent or provost in her church, the Evangelical Church of the River Plate. The program strengthened her in her new tasks. But she still has not found answers to the question of how she can combine her role as mother, wife and professional. She would have found more positive examples and models useful, she said.



**Seteng Aind:**  
*Increased "speaking power"*

As a lay woman, Seteng Aind from India, 41, was at first apprehensive about her participation in the program. She is a joint leader of the women's section in her church, and has been active for the past 10 years. And yet, although she works professionally as lecturer in a women's teacher training college, she began the program feeling she had no leadership skills. Two years later, those doubts are gone. "Now I feel that I can lead women, organize women," Aind said. The program helped her gain self-confidence, increase her "speaking power" and enable her to face public audiences. While she will continue her work as college lec-

turer, she also wants to continue serving her church, the Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Church. For her, the program highlighted the plentifulness of resources in other countries, compared with those in India. Poverty in rural areas is a major concern for her church, which works mainly with tribal people.



**Christina Schellenberger:** *More awareness of cultural differences*

The biggest surprise of the program for Christina Schellenberger from Canada, 21, was her increased awareness of cultural differences. Schellenberger, a psychology student, found it ironic that, as citizen of a nation proud of its cultural diversity, there was still much for her to learn. When she attended the program's opening event two years ago, she "almost had culture shock". Since then, she has gained greater knowledge of cultural differences. The program also helped her increase her self-respect and strengthen her identity. She first thought the program might lead her to become more involved in adult education. But the two-year process confirmed her conviction of the pressing need for church youth work and that therein lies her calling.

*(Lutheran World Information)*



## WHO WILL SPEAK FOR THEM?



*Moi, a 16-year-old girl from a rural province in Cambodia, was approached by a neighbor with the prospect of a job in the capital Phnom Penh. Instead, the neighbor sold Moi to a brothel for the equivalent of US\$150; after five days she was sold to a second brothel. By the end of two months, she had been sold to five different brothels, bringing to US\$750 the money exchanged for her. Moi, who was forced to have sex with as many as ten men every day, received nothing. Moi's mother, meanwhile, alarmed by her daughter's disappearance, had persuaded a policeman she knew to trace Moi, who was rescued and returned home. Upon examination by health workers, Moi was found to have two puncture marks at the base of her skull, indicating that she might have been injected with Valium to subdue her. Moi was also found to have a vaginal infection. She has so far tested negative for HIV.*

World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children

*At the end of August, the bodies of two eight-year-old girls were dug up from the backyard of a house in the Belgian town of Charleroi. A few weeks later, police discovered the bodies of two teenage girls who disappeared last year. Two other girls were found in a homemade dungeon, alive but weak. The leader of a pedophile ring had confessed to the kidnappings and the murders and led the police to the houses where the girls had been imprisoned. The discoveries deeply shocked the Belgians; their grief was mixed with outrage toward the pedophiles but also toward the authorities. Several informants had told the police about the pedophiles' involvement in sex trafficking and trade with child pornographic videotapes, but the police had acted very slowly. Meanwhile, the leader of the pedophile ring, who had previously been convicted of rape and kidnapping, was able to continue his ghastly conduct.*

The commercial sexual exploitation of children is a violation of children's rights, a destroyer of childhood, dignity and health, a multi-billion dollar industry that devalues children until they are little more than marketable commodities. One million children worldwide enter into the illegal sex market each year. The first World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, which was held in August 1996, brought together a host of people committed to ending this barbaric abuse of children all over the world. Government representatives from 119 countries and representatives from several NGOs attended the Congress in Stockholm, Sweden.





## **WORLD CONGRESS AGAINST COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN**

### **DECLARATION** (*excerpts*)

- Promote stronger cooperation between States and all sectors of society to prevent children from entering the sex trade and to strengthen the role of families in protecting children against commercial sexual exploitation;
- Criminalize the commercial sexual exploitation of children, as well as other forms of sexual exploitation of children, and condemn and penalise all those offenders involved, whether local or foreign, while ensuring that the child victims of this practice are not penalised;
- Enforce laws, policies and programmes to protect children from commercial sexual exploitation and strengthen communication and cooperation between law enforcement authorities;
- Create a climate through education, social mobilisation, and development activities to ensure that parents and others legally responsible for children are able to fulfill their rights, duties and responsibilities to protect children from commercial sexual exploitation.

### **AGENDA FOR ACTION** (*excerpts*)

#### **PREVENTION**

- provide children with access to education as a means of improving their status and make primary education compulsory and available free to all;
- improve access and provide relevant health services, education, training, recreation and a supportive environment to families and children vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation, including those who are displaced, homeless, refugees, stateless, unregistered, in detention and/or in state institutions;

#### **PROTECTION**

- in the case of sex tourism, develop or strengthen and implement laws to criminalize the acts of the nationals of the countries of origin when committed against children in the countries of destination ("extra-territorial criminal laws"); promote extradition and other arrangements to ensure that a person who exploits a child for sexual purposes in another country (the destination country) is prosecuted either in the country of origin or the destination country; strengthen laws and law enforcement, including confiscation and seizure of assets and profits, and other sanctions, against those who commit sexual crimes against children in destination countries; and share relevant data;
- in the case of trafficking of children, develop and implement national laws, policies and programmes to protect children from being trafficked within or across borders and penalise the traffickers; in cross-border situations, treat these children humanely under national immigration laws, and establish readmission agreements to ensure their safe return to their countries of origin accompanied by supportive services; and share relevant data;

#### **RECOVERY AND REINTEGRATION**

- adopt a non-punitive approach to child victims of commercial sexual exploitation in keeping with the rights of the child, taking particular care that judicial procedures do not aggravate the trauma already experienced by the child and that the response of the system be coupled with legal aid assistance, where appropriate, and provision of judicial remedies to the child victims;

#### **CHILD PARTICIPATION**

- identify or establish and support networks of children and young people as advocates of child rights, and include children, according to their evolving capacity, in developing and implementing government and other programmes concerning them.



### LWF Council Urges Member Churches to Act

The issue of children's rights in general was discussed at the LWF Council Meeting in Geneva, 24 Sept.- 1 Oct. 1996. In his report to the Council, the LWF General Secretary, Dr. Ishmael Noko said: "With respect to the serious plight of children I ask that the member churches include this issue on the agenda of their councils, synods or any governing bodies of their churches. They should also urge their national governments to pass and implement legislation that would expose and make it a criminal offense to exploit children for any purpose. It is necessary to remember at all times these children, like any of us adults, are made in the image of God and lay claim to the promises of the gospel."

*Victoria was 15 years old, anemic and eight months pregnant, when social workers found her sleeping in a rubbish heap behind the market in Accra, Ghana. Like many of the 10,000 children - including 4,000 girls, Victoria had come to the city from a poor village hoping to earn some money and eventually return home. When she arrived in Accra, she found work selling bags of ice water in the marketplace by day. But at night, she needed protection. So, like many girls in her situation, she acquired a male "minder". In exchange for sex, the girl got some security and a little extra food. But before long, she was pregnant, and her minder had moved on.*

Emma Brooker

World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children

The discussion resulted in a resolution passed by the LWF Council, urging the member churches to include the issue of the rights of children on their agendas. Member churches were asked to develop plans of action for child rights, including child labor, the

girl child, abuse of children, (including sexual abuse), street children, child soldiers, trauma healing, the family, and theological and cultural understanding of children.

## READERS' COMMENTS ON STREET CHILDREN ISSUE

The problem of "street-kids" is a worldwide issue which cannot easily be solved. Where these children come from and why they are situated in such a hostile habitat is never easily established, as each child has her or his own story and background. All the more, their problems have to be seen from their own point of view.

Whatever the reasons may be for them to live in the streets (usually lack of care, provision, support from their homes due to a variety of causes), they have to cope with rejection, intolerance, anger and violence, as well as cold, hunger, loneliness, discomfort and sickness. These circumstances can easily result in drug-addiction, like sniffing glue, which is difficult to stop. The circumstances also can result in petty crime, begging and serious diseases. Several different individuals and groups in Francistown have been supporting these children for a couple of years.

Learning new skills: We have established several classes for Christian and moral education and productive craft projects. We still encourage other organizations and churches to become aware of the problems of children and to make efforts in this regard.

Edwin T.L. Moepi, Francistown, Botswana

It is in prayer that God should really make a call to these children to change from bad to good. It is our duty, we ministers of God, to see that we reach children in streets so that we can lead them to the Lord Jesus Christ so that they will become good citizens all over the world.

See Matthew 25: 35-46.

Rev. Bowers Maheli, Margadli, Kenya







With respect to the issue of street children, I want to say quite frankly that the world has almost failed in saving the lives of our children. As I take a retrospective look at my country Liberia and other nations like Sudan, Rwanda, Angola, Somalia, Bosnia, etc., I see that the dream of our nations have been used to destroy their own future by a handful of power-thirsty individuals who have got no defined future direction and purpose for these children. It is regrettable to note that with the setting up of orphanages and day-care centers for war and street children, there still are many persons and even millionaires who disregard these ideas as a means of saving the lives of such children and getting them off the streets, while it is true that they themselves have no suggestions or contributions to make.

To conclude, I have a suggestion to make. The Bible quotes Jesus in Matthew 18:5 as saying that "Whosoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me." There are many who have the potential of taking care of some of these children on their own. I would like to suggest adoption of these children rather than just providing financial support, give them a chance to leave the sidewalks and enter into better homes.

Murphy V.S. Anderson  
Liberia, presently in Accra, Ghana

*"Whoever receives one such child  
in my name receives me;  
and whoever receives me,  
receives not me but him who sent  
me."*

(Mark 9:37)

Society needs to address this problem squarely, not just promulgating degrees or making declarations backing the child alone. Follow-up action what we need to see. Society must create avenues to educate parents, since the responsibility for education lies with them, in good living and having children whom they know they can care for. If everyone has that awareness, I think we would have less of such problems.

Change the pessimistic street child to an optimistic child. Give the street child sight and he will experience what it means to have one's sight back. He will hate the street and live for Jesus.

Freedom Timon Konvizinti  
Nigeria

Thanks for the wonderful 39th edition of *Youth Magazine* on "street children" published in May 1996. The problem of street children has become the concern of many Christian groups in my country, Nigeria. It was one of the main points of discussion at the National Youth Fellowship Children's Conference held in April 1996. Some of the questions raised were: are parents of these children or their guardians not aware of their responsibilities toward these children? What is the future of these children? Participants identified worsening economic and political conditions and inadequate parenting as the main causes of lacking welfare for children. Another danger is that children who are not actually in the street seem to imitate the lifestyle of street children.

The National Youth Fellowship, together with other youth groups, is working closely with the government's family support program to save these children. Efforts include creating special centers for skill acquisition, or "common learning centers".

David Udoh, National Youth Secretary  
National Youth Fellowship of Nigeria



## USING DRAMA TO FIGHT AIDS

### HIV/AIDS WORKSHOP IN ZIMBABWE

As part of the ongoing HIV/AIDS awareness-raising program, the AIDS Workshop in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, 17-22 May 1996, was organized in cooperation with the Lutheran Youth Network in southern Africa and the LWF/DMD Desk for Youth in Church and Society. Eleven participants from eight member churches and five southern African countries, Botswana, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, with three guests from Uganda and Kenya sought ways to address the issue of AIDS in their capacity as Lutheran youth leaders. The workshop also was visited by a fifteen-member drama group from Swaziland which operates with the assistance of the Lutheran Development Office in Mbabane. Participants and guests in the workshop pointed out several constructive methods for working with people infected and affected by HIV.

The use of drama is one of the most effective methods to engage young people in AIDS awareness-raising and behavior change, participants determined.

During the workshop, participants prepared action plans for their churches which will be followed up by the LWF Youth Desk. A lack of organizational support from church leadership was singled out as one of the difficulties facing youth leaders working against AIDS. A strategy document drafted by workshop participants will serve as a guideline for future Youth Desk involvement in AIDS work.

LWF Youth Desk involvement in the HIV/AIDS issue began as a result of the last Pre-Assembly Youth Conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1990.

Participants said they were concerned about the issue of HIV/

AIDS because it affects millions of people and because of the prejudice surrounding it.

Following the Africa Lutheran Youth Consultation in 1992, a workshop on HIV/AIDS education was organized jointly with the World Council of Churches Youth Team in 1993. A concrete result of the workshop was the leaflet "Youth — AIDS, why we care", with texts prepared by the workshop participants, later produced in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese and German. The leaflet was meant as a discussion-starter, giving a global impression of the complexity of HIV/AIDS-related issues. In addition, a resource book, "Making connections - facing AIDS" was published in 1994. An AIDS network in southern Africa was formed to follow up on the issue in the churches there.



*Members of the drama group in Swaziland national costume.*

Photo: Ondrej Prostředník





## NEWS IN BRIEF ON AIDS

*The following news briefs come from the Center for Disease Control Clearinghouse.*

### UNITED NATIONS

While the number of new HIV infections has declined in many countries due to safer sex practices, the rate of infection worldwide continues to grow rapidly, the UN program on AIDS (UNAIDS) reports. The agency says an estimated 7,500 people become infected each day. In the United States, new HIV infections have decreased 60 percent from an annual 100,000 a few years ago to 40,000. Other countries that have reported successful slowing of the AIDS epidemic include Australia, New Zealand, northern European countries and parts of sub-Saharan Africa. UNAIDS says the trend is partly due to changes in behavior, including increased condom use. Between 1994 and 1995, however, there was an increase of more than 25 percent in the global number of AIDS cases reported.

### USA

After having distanced themselves from the AIDS epidemic for years, predominantly black churches across North Carolina are now recognizing that the disease is impacting their own community. AIDS is the leading killer of the state's black men between the ages of 15 and 44, and the second leading killer of black women in the same age group. The General Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, representing more than 1,800 historically black churches, is hiring a Health and Human Services coordinator to promote AIDS education and prevention. Furthermore,

the state will host the National Black Church Education and Leadership Conference on AIDS next year. Some churches have also invited public health experts to lead AIDS programs for their congregations.

### DENMARK

The Danish health authorities must pay a Danish hemophiliac with HIV some US\$42,000, the country's Supreme Court decided in a surprising verdict. The patient contracted HIV in 1985 via an imported blood product that had not been heat-treated. The court ruled that the health authorities should have warned the doctors not to use the untreated blood product. The court also termed "a clear mistake" authorities' rejection in 1985 of a proposal for the use of a virus-inactivated, heat-treated imported blood product.



### BRAZIL

Since November, AIDS patients in Brazil receive combination drug treatments including the expensive new protease inhibitors. Officials say they will buy the drugs, which can cost up to US\$12,000 per patient per year, directly from the US manufacturers.

Brazil has the second-highest number of AIDS cases in the Western hemisphere, next to the United States. While several European countries are already offering the drugs free of charge, the number of AIDS cases in Brazil is far higher. The Health Ministry's estimate of 39,000 cases is believed to be very low, due to under-reporting. In 1994, the World Health Organization estimated the actual number at 550,000.

### CHINA

In an attempt to improve the safety of the blood supply in China and to make up for a shortage of donated blood, Chinese health officials are urging people to start giving blood for free.

The Red Cross Society of China has thus initiated a blood drive to



## NEWS IN BRIEF ON AIDS

*continued...*

encourage donors to give blood without compensation. Most donors now are paid between US\$120 and US\$240 and are given time off from work when they make donations. As a result, donors often gave blood even if they had hepatitis or HIV. China has begun to screen all blood products after some products were found to be contaminated with HIV in April.

The Chinese Health Ministry reported that 4,305 people were infected with HIV as of Sept. 1, 1996, up from 3,341 in 1995. But, experts estimate that as many as 100,000 Chinese could be infected.

### ZIMBABWE

Welfare groups in Zimbabwe have estimated that 45 percent of the country's children will be orphaned by AIDS within the next decade. Policy makers are responding by trying to devise a national welfare system to support the orphans. Worldwide, the number of people orphaned by AIDS is greater than the number of people with the disease. In Zimbabwe, welfare organizations are especially concerned about the children of farm workers, and the Farm Orphan Support Trust has begun to create a foster-care program for such children.

### THE UKRAINE

In the Ukraine, 10,800 people are infected with HIV, the Committee for AIDS Control reported recently. The rate of HIV is highest

in the Odessa, Nikilayev, Donetsk, and Lugansk regions, the capital Kiev, and the Crimea enclave. There is also concern about the spread of HIV in prisons, and screening of convicts is thus being considered.

### UNITED NATIONS

"One World, One Hope" was the theme designated by the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) for the 1996 World AIDS Day Dec. 1. Worldwide, 190 countries observe World AIDS Day to focus attention on the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) pandemic, which has resulted in an estimated 27.9 million HIV infections and 5.8 million deaths, including 1.3 million deaths in children.

## OTHER NEWS IN BRIEF



### ARGENTINA

(*eni*)

An Argentinean Christian youth organization trying to change young people's views of God and community has held a youth congress which attracted a crowd of 2,500 young people. The congress organizers - with an average age of 20 - represented nine church denominations. The congress, the first one of its kind in Argentina, was held in a public park and auditorium in Buenos Aires from 23

to 25 August, 1996, with the theme "Empowered by His Spirit".

Leaders of the youth organization, LAGRAM, which organized the congress, believe that most young people: "...see God as a space policeman ready to ruin humanity's post-modern 'festival' ... Most kids are afraid of committing themselves to any cause. They panic if they are asked to help take care of their neighborhood. They live in anguish because they don't have hope for the future, and many have lost the possibility of building authentic friendships".

LAGRAM's projects challenge young people to become involved in their communities through programs serving marginalized people and supporting young people living in difficult situations.

The success of the weekend congress was in part due to the performance of Christian rock bands and in part to the participation of the keynote speaker, Tony Campolo, a well known American evangelist. Campolo, who has written ten books and runs a television program with an audience of 22 million in the US, is also a sociologist and associate pastor of the Mount Carmel Baptist Church in East Philadelphia. Campolo is active in the Civil Rights Movement and president of the Evangelical Association for the Promotion of Education. But he is better known as one of President Bill Clinton's spiritual counselors - he meets President Clinton once a month to read the Bible and pray together.





Campolo told the congress that Jesus' mandate was to make not "believers" but "disciples". He added: "I want young people to understand that to be a Christian is not only to believe in Christ but to be ready to consecrate one's life to Christian service. The young must be ready to evangelize and to communicate God's love with all their minds, their souls and their strength".

Two rock bands - *Rescue*, a group of former drug addicts, and *Wings of Fire*, a Pentecostal band - said that playing rock was their ministry. Many young people, they said, had heard the gospel for the first time through their music. (Dafne Sabanes Plou)

## CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Upon completion of a 21-day leadership training course organized by the Evangelical Children's Association of the Central African Republic a spiritual retreat for Sunday-school children took place on July 13, 1996 in the Saint-Timothée Parish of Bangui. About 80 children took part in the retreat. The program consisted of prayers, recreation and introduction to Sunday-school work.

(Madeleine Nganawara)

## GERMANY

(EKD)

In May, about 30,000 young people from 35 countries took part in the opening of "Christival 96" in the Rudolf-Harbig-Stadium in Dresden. At the start of the youth congress, representatives from the *Länder* of the Federal Republic of Germany and other countries marched into the stadium with their *Land* or state flags. They represented their homeland symboli-

cally by wearing traditional or historical costumes and singing folk songs. The reunited Germany must become more Christian again, explained the Federal Minister for Youth, Claudia Nolte (CDU) in her greeting to the participants in the five-day meeting that had as its motto "Come follow Jesus". The necessary revival will not be successful without recollection of spiritual values. This "change in thinking" relies on role models, the politician said. In this process, the engagement and courage of the young Christians are contagious. Christian youth work is an alternative to drug consumption and retreat into sects.

According to the organizer's statistics, more than 1,500 young people from eastern Europe took part in "Christival 96". During the several days of the meeting, there were about 40 religious services, 200 seminars and 13 festivals with artists from Germany and abroad. A blood donation campaign to benefit AIDS victims in Zimbabwe was one of the high points of the event.

The youth congress was organized by Protestant Christians from regional and Free Churches as well as free Christian agencies. The costs were around six million German marks, according to the business manager of the organizations. Half was financed by participants' contributions. The other half was funded by donations, as well as subsidies from various regional churches, Saxony and the city of Dresden.

## KOREA

(lwi)

Ninety-eight young Korean Lutherans from 11 congregations gathered Aug. 8-10 at Luther Seminary in Shingal, South Korea, for the first major meeting of the [Korean] Lutheran Youth Association. Taking as their theme "Unity Amid Variety", the young Lutherans worshiped, prayed for the unity of the Korean peninsula, attended lectures and learned more about the Lutheran Church in Korea.

## ÖSTERREICH

(lwi)

Eine intensivere Zusammenarbeit der evangelisch-theologischen Fakultäten und Hochschulen des ost-mitteleuropäischen Raumes haben Vertreter dieser Fakultäten am 1. Juni 1996 in Wien vereinbart. Beim Ersten Ost-Mitteleuropäischen Fakultätentag aus Anlass des 175jährigen Bestehens der Evangelisch-theologischen Fakultät der Universität Wien sprachen sich die Teilnehmer für regelmässige Begegnungen und den Austausch von Forschungsergebnissen aus.

## SWEDEN

(Newsletter of the Church of SwedenYouth)

In August, 1,350 young people participated in a youth camp organized by five district groups in the diocese of Linköping. Participants slept in tents and cooked their own food. The theme of the camp was "Händer" which means both "hands" and "happening" in Swedish. There are a lot of different things you can do with your hands: rock-climbing, guitar-playing, ceramics, water-color painting,



## OTHER NEWS IN BRIEF

*continued...*



frisbee throwing. Participants tried out all the activities. Every local group had chosen a country, nation or *Land* to present during the camp. One group had even chosen to present a garden plot ("land" in Swedish). The camp was a big success and participants as well as the camp committee were very satisfied with the result of their efforts.

### SWEDEN

*(lwi)*

Officials of the Church of Sweden sent protest letters to Israel's ambassador in Stockholm and to the Swedish Foreign Department following the Aug. 27 demolition of a Palestinian youth center in Jerusalem's Old Town. The Church of Sweden was one of several international donors which funded the Markaz al-Laqlaq project for young and disabled Palestinians. Jan Henningsson said in a letter to Israeli ambassador Ben-Ami.

"It was with great sadness that I learned about the destruction of this innocent center for physical rehabilitation and social contacts," wrote Henningsson, who is secretary for ecumenical affairs of the Church of Sweden Central Board. "I cannot understand the rationale behind this negative action." Henningsson pointed out that he had visited the site a few years ago and seen the plaque inside the building that bore the names of the contributors. "Our support for Markaz al-Laqlaq has been no secret."

Kjell Jonasson, Middle East Secretary of the Church of Sweden Mission, sent a letter to the

Swedish Foreign Department protesting the dawn demolition of the Palestinian center.

According to media reports, Israeli police surrounded the youth center in the Muslim quarter of the walled Old City. Witnesses said a crane hoisted a bulldozer into the courtyard in front of the hall, since the vehicle could not fit through the Old City's narrow alleys. The bulldozer flattened the center under construction by Burj Laqlaq, a charitable society that runs adjacent day-care and sports centers for children and the handicapped.

Israeli officials said the demolished youth center was built without a permit and was financed by the Palestinian Authority in violation of the Israeli-Palestinian autonomy agreements. This was denied by Hayel Sandouka, president of the al-Laqlaq Tower Center, a charitable organization helping Palestinians in the Old City. Sandouka said that the building was funded by private charities, including organizations from Canada and Sweden. The building was part of a project that would include a center for the handicapped, a home for the elderly and a kindergarten.

### CANADA

*(lwi)*

Rafiki - the Swahili word for friend - is the name of the 1996-1998 National Youth Project of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC). The project will link Canadian and Tanzanian Lutheran youth, enabling

young Canadian Lutherans to better understand the challenges young Christians face in Tanzania, the ELCIC magazine *Canada Lutheran* reported in October. Among other things, young members of the Canadian church will raise funds to support youth work in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.

The Rafiki project got underway at this year's ELCIC youth gathering, with several hundred youth writing postcards to new friends in Lutheran schools in Tanzania. Some 1,500 Lutheran youth attended the "Mourning into Dancing" gathering held Aug. 15-18 in Camrose, Alberta.

*Canada Lutheran* also reported on an ecumenical exchange program that brings together young Tanzanians and Canadians. The program is jointly sponsored by the ELCIC, the Anglican Church of Canada and Canada World Youth. Twenty young people - ten Canadians and ten Tanzanians - came together in June to begin a six-month "journey of discovery together".

The Canadian portion of the exchange took place in Salmon Arm, British Columbia. The young adults spent four days a week working in community development projects and one day on educational activities. They also participated in the worship and social life of the Anglican and Lutheran churches in Salmon Arm. Weekends were spent with host families. The Tanzanian portion of the exchange program began in September.





## “NOT TO WORSHIP IN VAIN”

### PRE-COUNCIL YOUTH WORKSHOP IN GENEVA, 18-19 SEPTEMBER 1996

A group of eight young women and men met in Geneva in September for a two-day Pre-Council Youth Workshop. They were invited by the LWF/DMD Desk for Youth in Church and Society to serve as stewards during the LWF Council meeting later the same month. The LWF Stewards Program was developed as an opportunity for young people from our member churches to be exposed to the life of the LWF as well as to facilitate the smooth running of the annual LWF Council meetings.

In the workshop, the stewards discussed possibilities of more youth involvement in the worship in their home churches and also learned about Council matters and tasks. Although the stewards are all currently living in Europe, they come from different cultural backgrounds: Colombia, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Madagascar, Namibia and Slovakia.

The theme of this year's workshop was "Not to worship in vain (Matthew 15:9) - Youth and contextualization of worship". It often is said that traditional forms of worship exclude youth from participation. On the other hand, many churches experience that so-called "youth services" exclude other age groups. The question: "How can youth be better integrated into the worship life of the church?" was addressed during the workshop.

*The Pre-Council Youth Workshop brought this message to the LWF Program Committee for Mission and Development (see box):*

"As we discussed the theme of our Workshop, the question of the relevance of our worship to our culture was raised. We, as young people with our own sub-culture, feel the need for worship to be in critical dialogue with culture. In order to make worship relevant, the possibility of worship to question cultural stereotypes should be emphasized.

"We learned from the different country reports that young people in our countries are ready to discover the value of our respective worship traditions. Since there is often a lack of understanding of common traditional forms and content of worship, we are convinced that this could be changed to some degree if the worshipping congregation had a chance to be educated towards a deeper understanding of the meaning of liturgy.

"We were encouraged to hear from each other that in almost all of our churches there are occasions when young people are invited to participate in or even lead worship. We, as participants, see opportunities in special services by youth for youth to familiarize youth with worship. However, such occasions cannot replace gatherings of the whole people of God, in view of which we stress that no worship should be exclusively limited to one specific group within a congregation.

"But we also realize with regret that many young people leave our churches with the feeling that some aspects of spirituality are missing in our worship tra-

ditions. Although the constitutive role of the worship in the life of the church was not disputed, the fact that there are many problems concerning forms of worship cannot be overlooked. We, as young people, have questions concerning the following elements of worship: proclamation, hymns and liturgical acts.

"Often worship is pastor-centered and, thus, excluding the variety of talents present among youth in the congregation. In our view, it is the pastor's role to see to it that "the gospel is preached in conformity with a pure understanding of it and that the sacraments be administered in accordance with the divine word" (CA VII.) This means that he or she should serve as a facilitator of the expression of the different gifts present in the worshipping congregation. This may be done by establishing worship committees in the congregations or even through direct participation of lay people in the proclamation of the word.

"Very often, with the use of hymns and music only from former centuries, youth experiences worship as backward-oriented, with no relevant message for our time. We suggest that our worship be open to text and musical forms through which faith is expressed in a contemporary way.

"We, the participants of the workshop, commit ourselves to work in our churches towards creating greater opportunities for youth involvement in worship. It is our conviction that worship is in vain if the honest spiritual concerns of the youth and other groups are deliberately excluded..."



## Letters to the Editors

I want to express my thanks for your magazine, which is very well done and always interesting. Thanks a lot once again and may God bless you all!

*Minna Luoto, Finland*

I have been receiving *Youth Magazine* since 1984. I appreciate the marvelous job that you are doing. I'm now working for a Lutheran Printing Press and am also editor of a youth magazine named "Dawn". LWF *Youth Magazine* gives me a lot of interesting inspiration concerning development, environment, children in the world and particularly in Africa. My letter is to encourage you, youth is a very essential and important issue.

*Haman Paul, Cameroon*

I want to pass my thanks to the LWF Youth Desk for the good information you always pass on to us through this wonderful magazine. I promise that in future I'll write something for the magazine to share with you the life of youth in Botswana (southern Africa). I pray for the preparation of the PAYC 1997 and for the LWF Ninth Assembly in Hong Kong. May God bless and strengthen you.

*Thabiso Daniel Segatlhe, Botswana*

I would like to thank you for the good work you are doing. *Youth Magazine*, as an international publication, really connects all youth of different races to a common goal. Your column on pen pals is also of great significance toward establishing international friendships. As per your Editorial in issue No. 39/96, I would very much support your idea on the need for international exchange among young people. Thank you.

*Michael M.M.S. Dube, Zimbabwe*

I have just decided to extend my sincere thanks for work well done. You are in an excellent ministry. I have been a reader of *Youth Magazine* since 1988. I found it a treasure and a great challenge in my Christian walk that I should be able to go out for Christ to evangelize, (Matthew 28:19-20). *Youth Magazine* helped me to grow in Christ with an appropriate understanding of the ministry. God bless you all.

*Kudakwashe Makado, Zimbabwe*

I wish to thank you sincerely for your positive response to my request. Of course, I am thankful that you accepted me on the list of *Youth Magazine* recipients. Now I am glad that I am in touch with what goes on around the Lutheran world to which I belong. I have been able to read and understand the plight of young men and women who are struggling to acquire recognition and acceptance in their various societies - church, government and media. And of course, LWF *Youth Magazine* serves their purpose well. Indeed, issues 36, 37, 38 and 39 were exclusive to me and I hail this wonderful work you and your fellow staff are doing! Keep it up and keep us informed!

*James Weke Onyango, Kenya*

*We are very happy to receive such positive and encouraging reactions from our readers! We appreciate your comments but would also welcome constructive criticism and suggestions for improvement.*





*I'm looking for pen pals from any part of the world. I am a student at medical college and I have many good hobbies that I want to share with my pen pals. I am 25 years old. I would reply to letters in English.*

Mr. Rajendra BANSARIAR  
Medical College Jabalpur  
Hotel No. 2, Room No. 54  
IN-482 003 Jabalpur (MP)  
India

*Two boys from Tamso Junior Secondary School wish to have pen pals. They are Richard Innocent K. AGBENYEAVU, 16, and Joseph Aidoo BANKYIM, 10. Both answer letters in English. The address is:*

Tamso Junior Secondary School  
P.O. Box 128  
Tarkwa, Western Region  
Ghana

*I'm a girl aged 19 years and doing my 'O' level at the Bethel Secondary School in Gwanda. My birthday is 19 September 1977 and I am a Lutheran. I learned about this magazine from friends of my church. My hobbies are: going to church, religious discussions, traveling, reading, writing, fishing, watching television and exchanging cards.*

Ms. Precious Mabhangha NCUBE  
Bethel Secondary School  
P.O. Box 213  
Gwanda  
Zimbabwe

*I want to have pen pals from any corner of the world, no restriction in age or gender. I am a 22-year-old male student. I like playing musical instruments. I would like brothers and sisters who want to share prayers with me and discuss life problems (spiritual and others).*

Mr. Tekle-Medinin Aberra  
P.O. Box 90043  
Addis Ababa  
Ethiopia

*I am looking forward to a pen pal from Switzerland or any other country in the world. I am a Malawian boy aged 22. My hobbies are: reading the Bible, drama show and exchanging gifts. I reply to letters in English only.*

Mr. Jonathan M. WASI  
P.O. Box 60  
Mibowi  
Malawi

*I am a 22-year-old electrical engineering student. I am looking forward to a pen pal from any part of the world. My hobbies are Bible reading, traveling, computers and watching television.*

Mr. Janko VALENTIK  
Narodnog Fronta 56  
YU-21000 Novi Sad  
Yugoslavia



## PUBLICATIONS

### AVAILABLE FROM THE YOUTH DESK

1. "Building Bridges: Towards an Asian Solidarity" - report from the Asian Lutheran Youth Conference in the Philippines, May 1995 - *in English*
2. HIV/AIDS brochure, produced by the HIV/AIDS Workshop in Windhoek, Namibia, May 1993 (jointly organized by the World Council of Churches (WCC) Youth Team and LWF Youth in Church and Society) - *in English, German, French, Portuguese and Spanish*
3. Resource book on HIV/AIDS (published jointly by the WCC Youth Team and LWF Youth Desk):
  - Making Connections - Facing AIDS - *in English*;
  - Face au SIDA - créons des liens solidaires - *en Français*;
  - Hagamos Frente al SIDA - creemos lazos de solidaridad - *en castellano*
4. LWF Pre-Council Workshop, Representation of Youth in the Nordic Churches, Kristiansand, Norway, 1993 - *in English*
5. "It is good for us to be here"/"Wir freuen uns, hier zu sein" - report/Bericht, Youth Conference/Jugendkonferenz, Budapest, Hungary/Ungarn, 1993 - *in English/auf Deutsch*
6. Copies of *Youth Magazine* nos. 37, 38 and 39
7. Report on the Pre-Assembly Youth Conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina, January 1990:
  - "Do not say: I am too young - I send you" - *in English*
  - "Sage nicht: ich bin zu jung" - *auf Deutsch*
  - "No digas: soy muy joven - te enviare a..." - *en castellano*
8. Report from Youth HIV/AIDS Workshop in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, May 1996 - *in English*





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We want to focus mainly on local and national youth work and on practical reality more than on administrative or financial structures. We are looking for ideas and methods which appeal to young people today and which are also rewarding to workers whether professionally employed or volunteering.

If you find this invitation interesting, please contact our center as soon as possible, and we will send you more information.

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OF FINLAND  
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00161 HELSINKI  
FINLAND

TEL: 358-9-180-21  
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*Welcome!*

LEENA MÄRSYLÄ  
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Zeichnung: Jals

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*(John Hick)*



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